

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A surface inspecting apparatus for inspecting at least one of a shape and a flatness of a surface ~~to be inspected of an~~ a thin-plate-shaped object to be inspected, the apparatus comprising:

a suspending unit which suspends the object substantially vertically with respect to a horizontal plane and moves the suspended object upwardly and downwardly as the object is in a substantially vertical state; and

a supporting unit capable of supporting member on which a lower end of the suspended object abuts and which supports the suspended object in a state in which as the object surface is in a the substantially vertical state; and

a control moving-unit which moves controls the suspending unit to suspend the object in a substantially vertical direction while the inspected surface is maintained in the substantially vertical state by substantially half the force of gravity of the object.

2. (currently amended): The surface inspecting apparatus according to claim 1, wherein ~~the supporting unit includes a supporting member which supports a lower end of the object in the state in which the surface is in the substantially vertical state, and~~

~~wherein the moving control unit lifts~~ controls the suspending unit to move the suspended
object upwardly until the lower end of the suspended object is separated from the supporting
member and thereafter ~~lowers~~ moves the suspended object downwardly until the lower end of the
suspended object abuts on the supporting member again.

3. (currently amended): The surface inspecting apparatus according to claim 1 2,
wherein the supporting member has an elastic member provided at a portion where the lower end
of the suspended object abuts.

Claims 4 -10. (canceled).